Mark 2:1-12

- Please open in God's Word to the New Testament Gospel **according to Mark** chapter 2.

- **READ Mark 1:14-15, 2:1-12**. May God bless the reading and hearing of His Infallible Word.

- My wife and I are what is commonly known as empty nesters. Many of you here this morning are no doubt also in that position.

- Like many of you, our children are grown, married, and independent. At this stage of our lives, we've had time and opportunity to do certain things together that we could not do when our children were younger, **and our priorities were different**.

- So, with this change, over the course of the last few years, we've had a few occasions to travel together.

- We've had the opportunity to visit Europe on these occasions. One of the activities we have enjoyed doing together, no doubt because there are so many, is visiting some of the great European cathedrals.

- Many are quite beautiful and majestic structures, generally centuries old. Some of you may have seen them or seen pictures of them. We've been to Notre Dame in Paris, Westminster Cathedral in London, Ely Cathedral in Ely, England, St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and several others.

- One cathedral in Milan, Italy, is known for its three very large arched doorways, which lead from the church vestibule (or lobby) into the sanctuary, where worship services are conducted.

- There is one doorway on the right, one on the left, and the main doorway in the center.

- An inscription is carved into the stone above each of the three stone arched doorways leading into the sanctuary.

- The inscription on the **right archway** entrance reads, "**All that pleases is but for a moment**."

- The inscription on the **left archway** entrance reads, "**All that troubles is but for a moment**."

- The inscription over the **center archway** leading into the sanctuary reads, "**All that is important is eternal**."

- What these words are addressing, of course, are **spiritual and eternal priorities**.

- As you enter the sanctuary, the message is clear: Nothing is more important than **giving** your **full attention, your priority, to the worship, adoration, and praise of the one true almighty God of heaven and earth**!

- So, in essence, nothing is more important **in this life than the eternal needs of our souls**.

- Yet how contrary that thinking is to the masses of people in our generation who seem to give so little attention to the needs of their eternal souls!

- It was the prayer of a young theologian named Jonathan Edwards, who prayed, "O God stamp eternity on my eyeballs." Mind you, this was before **he reached the age of 20.**

- If I could summarize the **account of Jesus' healing of the paralytic in Mark 2, I would say that this event** teaches u**s a lesson about spiritual and eternal priorities**.

- **Why? Because of the eternal value of each and every soul God has made**.

- A soul, as we teach our children in the catechism, which "can never die."

- So this morning our objective is to use this account in Mark chapter 2 to consider **three priorities for our souls that we need to give attention to this morning**.

- When I say we, I do mean WE. **Both believers in Christ and unbelievers**.

- I'll break down these priorities into three words, easy to remember and which we can expand upon: They are:

    1) Forgiveness
    2) Faith
    3) Authority

- I will repeat that: Forgiveness, Faith, and Authority.

Forgiveness

- In our text today, and quite common in Mark's writings, we have a vivid and descriptive example of the Lord Jesus Christ ministering to a very needy person.

- In verse 1, Mark tells us that the **Lord Jesus returned to** Capernaum **after some days**.

- We learn in chapter one that the **Lord had already healed many sick people and cast out demons in that town. We see that in 1:34**

- As a result of this, He became very well known!

- Mark 1:33 says His popularity was so great that the **whole city was gathered together at the door** of Simon and Andrew's home.

- Getting up very early, the Lord slipped away to pray. Then, after "**everyone was looking for him**" (1:37), He left Capernaum to go throughout Galilee (a region in northern Israel) **to preach the Word of God**.

- In Mark 1:38, the Lord tells the disciples" **"Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out**."

- Mark had told us, at least in part, what the main topic he was preaching was!

- **Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; <u>repent and believe in the gospel</u>."**

- So we see in our text in Mark chapter 2 that the Lord returned to Capernaum, not surprisingly doing what? Look at Verse 2. "**Preaching the word to them**."

- We can **easily picture this scene**. Sitting or standing in a room packed full of people. So crowded that no one can get in the door. Not even **STANDING Room only**!

- There were all kinds of people there, including scribes and religious leaders, who were undoubtedly looking for a reason to accuse Jesus or try to trap him!
- As Jesus was preaching the word, suddenly, there was an interruption!

- Pieces of the roof fell on everyone, and then a man, lying on perhaps some pallet or mat, was lowered down in front of Jesus.

- **<u>And that leads us to our first priority</u>**. We see it, don't we, in the **Lord's immediate** response to the paralyzed man!

- What does He say in verse 5, "**Son, your sins are forgiven**."

- Here is a man with a great need. He certainly had a great physical need, as he could not walk.

- He was dependent on others to get around. His **desire to come to the Lord was undoubtedly to be healed of his condition.**

- **But the Savior of sinners saw what this man needed more than anything else**!

- He tenderly calls him son (an endearing word for child in Greek) and speaks **to the man about sin and the need for forgiveness**!

- We see this time and time again in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Why? Because He is interested in the needs of the soul.

- **He is interested in one's spiritual condition**. Oh, yes, he is interested in this man's physical needs, but above all, he wants to address his spiritual condition.

- The same was true in Luke 7 when a woman was at the Pharisee's house with an alabaster jar of perfume. Luke calls her a "**sinful woman**."

- Do you remember the story? She wiped Jesus' feet with her hair and poured perfume on them.

- Jesus said to her in Luke 7:48, "**Your sins are forgiven**."

- So, we see the **absolute necessity of** forgiving **sins as the first priority**!

- Let me stop here and ask quite directly **if you know the forgiveness of your sins**.

- Regardless of who you are, **are you concerned about sin this morning**?

- The lesson from our passage is that God is very concerned about sin!

- We are in one of two positions this morning.

- We are either, as the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians chapter two, still **dead in trespasses and sins,** or we have been made alive in Christ and know something of what the Psalmist knew in Psalm 32 when he wrote: "**Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**"

- May I ask where you are this morning? Is the forgiveness of sin a spiritual priority for you?

- We all have the same need as the man in our story who came to Jesus unable to walk.

- We need to hear Jesus say, "**Son, your sins are forgiven**." We may live in a different age and time, but man's sinful nature is still the same!

- Sin is a spiritual disease, and we should make no mistake it has been and will be a lifelong condition! The Psalmist in Psalm 51 can write, "**Surely I was sinful from the time my mother conceived me**."

- Isaiah the prophet writes, "**We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to our own way**."

- We all have the same problem as the needy man in Mark 2. The only question is, have we heard in our hearts, "**Son, your sins are forgiven**?"

- I would not call myself a frequent or heavy Facebook user. However, I do now and then get on it. Somehow, I got linked or friended to a **JC Ryle** Facebook site.

- Ryle was an English Evangelical Anglican Bishop living in Britain in the 19th century. A very prolific author and a wonderful teacher of the Word of God.

- I recently found a Facebook quote by Ryle that is relevant to our topic this morning and reflects why this topic is so important!

"How incredible it is that we do not hate sin more than we do! Sin is the cause of all the pain and disease in the world. God did not create man to be an ailing and suffering creature. It was sin and nothing but sin, which brought in all the ills that flesh is heir to. It was a sin to which we owe every racking pain, every loathsome infirmity, and every humbling weakness to which our poor bodies are liable. Let us keep this ever in mind. Let us hate sin with a godly hatred. **Never are men's hearts in such a hopeless condition as when they are not sensible of their own sins**." J.C. Ryle

- Dear brother or sister in Christ, are you pressing on in your fight against sin?

- The famous English Puritan John Owen wrote, "**He that has slight thoughts of sin never had great thoughts of God**."

- Let us remember the sufferings and death of the Savior so that there could be forgiveness. Again, from John Owen, "**There is no death of sin without the death of Christ**."

- Do you recognize your needy condition if you are here without Christ this morning?

- Do you recognize how sin separates you from God, and as a result, you are in a very dangerous position?

- Do the words of the prophet Isaiah describe your situation?

- "**Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities (another word for sin in the Bible) have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his frame you so that he does not hear**." Is. 59;1

- Ah, but the wonderful news of this passage, and indeed the gospel itself, is that our Lord Jesus Christ is a friend of sinners!

- How wonderful that the Holy Spirit describes to us what the Lord Jesus is like when it comes to reaching out to those who need forgiveness of sin!

- Just look down a few verses in Mark chapter 2. **READ Mark 2:15 -17**

- So, from our passage this morning, we see the perfect physician of the soul and body! And we see **the absolute necessity of** forgiving **sins as a priority**!

Faith

- We must move on to **the second spiritual priority in our passage**. That is also taken from Mark 2 and Verse 5.

- It is something that Jesus saw as the paralytic was being lowered down from the roof! "**And when Jesus <u>saw their faith</u>, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven**."

- The second priority that **<u>we see is the absolute necessity of faith</u>**!

- What we cannot miss from our passage is that true faith recognizes its needy condition and always comes to the Lord Jesus Christ. It does so despite the obstacles. In other words, there is a persistence to true faith!

- This is exactly what we see in this passage! Surely, this reflects what Jesus SAW!

- We see this **persistency in spite of obstacles is often found in various gospel accounts**.

- Just a couple of examples! Remember the story of **Blind Bartimaeus** in Mark chapter 10 that we read earlier? **READ Mark 10:46-52**.

- Did you see the persistence and determination of his faith? Everyone was telling him be quiet, sit down! Mark writes, "**he cried out all the more**." "**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."**

- Does your faith have a similar determination? You see, faith is not simply some feeling!

- I think often times it is thought of in that way! NO. Faith always shows itself by action. By a determination to come to Christ! Does that describe us this morning?

- Earlier, I mentioned the woman at the Pharisee's home in Luke 7. She anointed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair!

- Can you imagine the obstacles she felt in that culture? Yet Jesus said to her, "**Your sins are forgiven**." In Luke 7:50, he also said to her, "**Your faith has saved you. Go in peace**."

- As hard as it was for her, she knew that she needed Christ and would NOT let anything stand in her way!

- So, it was for the four friends in our passage and, no doubt, the paralytic in Mark 2. They would NOT let anything stand in their way of reaching the Lord Jesus Christ!

- Let me ask again! In spite of the obstacles of this sinful world, our own sinful heart, and the temptation of the evil one, **does your faith look to the Lord Jesus Christ**?

- **Yes**, **the forgiveness of sins** is absolutely necessary, **but you can only obtain it through faith in the Savior**.

- **Can you sing whole-heartedly "My faith looks up to Thee? Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine?**

- True faith **always comes to Christ**. It **looks to the Savior**.

- True faith trusts and embraces wholeheartedly the Savior, knowing we are accepted by God only because of Christ and what He did on the cross to pay for sin!

- The Apostle Peter wrote, "**To you who believe he is precious.**"

- Isn't that true for us believers in Christ this morning? The Lord Jesus is precious; indeed, He becomes more so each day!

- Perhaps you are not sure this morning if you are a Christian! Let me say look to Christ. Open up the Word of God and look to Christ in the gospel accounts.

- In the Old Testament account (Numbers 21:9), God sent poisonous snakes as a consequence of the people's sins. After they were bitten, all the people had to do was look at the bronze snake Moses made—a snake lifted up on a pole.

- Jesus said in John 3:14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

- My friends, there are many snakes in our lives! They are the sins that so easily weigh us down. By faith, look to Christ alone.

Authority

- This brings us to the final of the three spiritual priorities. **We've stressed the priority of the forgiveness of sin. We've stressed the priority of faith.**

- Lastly, I would mention perhaps the most important priority: the **necessity of giving yourself to the one who has the authority to forgive your sins**.

- The people present in this house learned a great lesson that day.

- They learned something wonderful about the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone has the **right and authority to forgive sins**, **and he is God in the flesh**!

- Jesus is the eternal God who entered this world to be both fully God and man!

- As the Apostle John wrote, "**The Word became Flesh and dwelt among us**."

- Now, there were some present (teachers of the law of God) who thought Jesus was being rather disrespectful in telling this invalid man that his sins were forgiven.

- However, they were right about one thing. Listen: **Read Vs. 6 and 7**.

- What were they correct about? **Only God can forgive sins**!

- And Jesus then went on to prove that he was God. How?

1) Look at verse 8. **He knew in his spirit their thoughts**:

2) Then, at his command, the paralytic **man got up and walked**! **This was the hand of God, and God alone.**

   - **You see, the act of healing this man was evidence that He is God and**, therefore, **that He alone has the right and authority to forgive men of their sins!**

   - Now, I must ask you an important question. Do you believe that Jesus is God Himself?

   - Do you believe that Jesus can forgive your sins? That He has the **right and authority** to forgive.

This, I say, is the most important priority.

1) **What do you believe about Jesus Christ?**
2) **Is he God?**
3) **Is he your Savior?**
4) **Is he the one who died for your sins?**
5) **Is he the one who is able to forgive you of your sins and give you peace with God?**
6) **He alone has the authority to forgive! If this is true, and it is, have each of us in this room given ourselves to the one who has this authority?**

   - **The Bible says, "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord, (you believe him to be God), and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, (you have faith), you will be saved" (saved and forgiven of sins)**

   - **The people left amazed! They left praising God! Vs: 12.**

   - **May God help us to give ourselves to the one who has the authority to forgive our sins**!